

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 MC-02 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00 RSR-01 /127 W
----- 027615

R 221646 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2089
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 07240

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, SN, AS, UK
SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN DEFENSE MINISTER BARNARD' S TALKS
IN LONDON
REF: LONDON 4505, 4955

1. HICKMAN, HEAD FCO SOUTHWEST PACIFIC DEPT., HAS REVIEWED WITH US AUSTRALIAN DEFENSE MINISTER BARNARD' S DISCUSSIONS HERE JUNE 18-21 WITH BRITISH LEADERS. PRIMARY BRITISH INTEREST IN TALKS WAS FUTURE OF AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION IN FPDA, AND MOST OF THE TIME WAS DEVOTED TO THIS SUBJECT, WITH OUTCOME " NEAR BOTTOM OF OUR RANGE OF EXPECTATIONS". IN EFFECT, BARNARD CONFIRMED AUSTRALIAN INTENT TO WITHDRAW FROM FPDA IN 1974-1976.

2. BARNARD CONFIRMED SCHEDULE FOR WITHDRAWAL OF AUSTRALIAN GROUND TROOPS AS OUTLINED LONDON 4505, LEAVING CARETAKER GROUP OF 150 BY APRIL 1975. HE INDICATED THERE COULD BE SOME FLEXIBILITY IN 1976 FINAL WITHDRAWAL DATE OF MIRAGE SQUADRONS AT BUTTER-
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WORTH, BUT BRITISH GOT IMPRESSION THAT BEST THEY COULD
HOPE FOR WOULD BE EXTENSION INTO EARLY 1977. ALL
AUSTRALIAN MILITARY UNITS WOULD REVERT TO AUSTRALIAN
NATIONAL COMMAND IN APRIL 1974. NO CHANGE IS PLANNED
AT PRESENT IN OCCASIONAL DEPLOYMENT OF AUSTRALIAN NAVAL
VESSELS TO AREA.

3. HICKMAN SAID BARNARD GOT VERY ROUGH PASSAGE FROM
LORD CARRINGTON AND SIR ALEC DOUGLAS- HOME, AND SPENT
SOME TIME WITH PRIME MINISTER HEATH WHO DID NOT MINCE
WORDS. HOWEVER IT WAS CLEAR TO BRITISH THAT HE HAD
VIRTUALLY NO NEGOTIATING FLEXIBILITY; HE WAS IN CLOSE
TELEPHONIC TOUCH WITH WHITLAM DURING COURSE OF VISIT.
BRITISH PRESSED PARTICULARLY HARD ON MIRAGES, BUT
DESPITE FACT THAT MALAYSIANS HAVE MADE IT CLEAR TO
GOA THAT THEY DO NOT REGARD POSSIBLE OVERCROWDING
AT BUTTERWORTH AS REQUIRING AUSTRALIAN WITHDRAWAL BY
ANY SPECIFIC DATE, HE ARGUED THIS POINT AS JUSTIFI-
CATION FOR 1976 WITHDRAWAL. HE DID SAY THAT AUSTRALIA
LACKED ADEQUATE AIRFIELDS AT HOME FOR EFFECTIVE RE-
DEPLOYMENT OF MIRAGE SQUADRONS, AND THERE WAS
POSSIBILITY THAT WITHDRAWAL FROM MALAYSIA COULD THERE-
FORE BE SLIGHTLY DELAYED. HE ALSO ARGUED THAT INDONESIA
WAS APPREHENSIVE OF FPDA; BRITISH REBUTTAL OF THIS
POINT AND EVIDENCE THAT PRC IS CONTENT WITH FPDA FAILED
TO BUDGE HIM.

4. AGREED PRESS LINE WILL STATE THAT NO FINAL DECISIONS
TAKEN, THAT VALUABLE DISCUSSIONS WERE HELD CONCERNING
AUSTRALIA' S FUTURE ROLE IN FPDA, AND THAT BARNARD' S
TALKS HERE COMPLETE THE CONSULTATIONS AMONG FPDA

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R 221646 Z JUN 73
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2090
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 07240

PARTNERS ON SUBJECT. BRITISH EXPECT DECISIONS WILL
BE QUICKLY CONFIRMED AT ALP CONFERENCE NEXT MONTH, AND
THEN MADE PUBLIC.

5. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT GOA HAS NOT YET INDICATED
ANY INTENTION TO FORMALLY WITHDRAW FROM THE FPDP; HER
FORMAL COMMITMENT TO CONSULT WITH OTHER PARTNERS IN
THE EVENT OF EXTERNAL THREAT WILL PRESUMABLY REMAIN
IN BEING. WITHDRAWAL FROM MILITARY PARTICIPATION IN
BRITISH VIEW NOT ONLY MAKES THAT COMMITMENT QUITE
EMPTY, IT WILL SERIOUSLY AND IN LONG RUN PERHAPS
FATALLY ERODE THE BASIS FOR THE OTHER FOUR MEMBERS TO
CONTINUE WITH MEANINGFUL JOINT MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS.

6. WHILE FUTURE BRITISH ROLE WILL NOW HAVE TO BE
FORMALLY CONSIDERED BY CABINET DEFENSE AND OVERSEAS
POLICY COMMITTEE, HICKMAN SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT
HMG WOULD CARRY ON " AT LEAST AS LONG AS THE AUSTRALIAN
MIRAGES REMAIN". HE IMPLIED THAT ONCE THEY ARE GONE,
THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF AN INTEGRATED DEFENSE WOULD LOSE
CREDIBILITY AND BRITISH ROLE WOULD THEN BECOME VERY
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UNCERTAIN. BRITISH WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE FOR NEXT
FEW YEARS GREATLY STRENGTHENED BY NEW ZEALAND'S
STAUNCH ATTITUDE.

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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SECSTATE WASHDC
SINGAPORE
WELLINGTON

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